

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT HIV & AIDS







WHAT IS AIDS?

AIDS is the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome – a serious illness that makes the body unable to fight infection. A person with AIDS is susceptible to certain infections and cancers. When a person with AIDS cannot fight off infections, this person becomes ill. These infections can eventually kill a person with AIDS.








WHAT CAUSES AIDS?

The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) causes AIDS. Early diagnosis of HIV infection is important! If you have been told that you have HIV, you should get prompt medical treatment. In many cases, early treatment can enhance a person's ability to remain healthy as long as possible. Your doctor will help you determine the best treatment for you. Free anonymous and confidential testing with counseling is available at every health department in Kentucky. After being infected with HIV, it takes between two weeks to six months before the test can detect the antibodies to the virus.




HOW IS THE HIV VIRUS SPREAD?

-  Sexual contact (oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse) with an infected person when blood, pre-ejaculatory fluid, semen or cervical/vaginal secretions are exchanged.
-  Sharing syringes, needles, cotton, cookers and other drug-injecting equipment with someone who is infected.
-  Receiving contaminated blood or blood products (very unlikely now because blood used in transfusions has been tested for HIV antibodies since 1985)
-  An infected mother passing HIV to her unborn child before or during childbirth, and through breast feeding.
-  Receipt of transplant, tissue/organs, or artificial insemination from an infected donor.
-  Needle stick or other sharps injury in a health care setting involving an infected person. Infections sometimes can be prevented by taking post-exposure prophylaxis anti-retroviral drugs. Strict adherence to universal precautions is the best way to prevent exposures.

YOU CANNOT GET HIV THROUGH CASUAL CONTACT SUCH AS:

-  Sharing food, utensils, or plates
-  Touching someone who is infected with HIV
-  Hugging or shaking hands
-  Donating blood or plasma (this has NEVER been a risk for contracting HIV)
-  Using public rest rooms
-  Being bitten by mosquitoes or other insects
-  Using tanning beds





HOW CAN I PREVENT AIDS?

-  Do not share needles or other drug paraphernalia.
-  Do not have sexual intercourse except with a monogamous partner whom you know is not infected and who is not sharing needles. If you choose to have sex with anyone else, use latex condoms (rubbers), female condoms or dental dams, and water based lubricant every time you have sex.
-  Educate yourself and others about HIV infection and AIDS.

WOMEN AND HIV/AIDS

For females, the majority of AIDS cases in Kentucky are identified as heterosexual, and injection drug users.








All pregnant women should have blood tests to check for HIV infection.

-  Mothers can pass HIV infection to their babies during pregnancy, labor and delivery, and by breastfeeding with cracked nipples.
-  Without treatment before birth, about 25% (1 out of 4) of the babies born to HIV infected women will get HIV.
-  Medical treatment for the HIV infected woman during pregnancy, labor, and delivery can reduce the chance of the baby getting HIV from its mother to less than 8% (1 out of 12).
-  An HIV infected mother should not breastfeed her newborn baby.

IS TREATMENT AVAILABLE IF I ALREADY HAVE HIV/AIDS?




After being infected with HIV, it takes between two weeks and six months before the test can detect the HIV virus. **Early diagnosis of HIV infection is important!** Free anonymous and confidential testing and counseling is available at every health department in Kentucky. Testing requires drawing a small tube of blood from a vein in your arm. Some health departments and community based organizations provide tests that only require swabbing the mouth. If you have HIV, you should get prompt medical treatment. In many cases, early treatment can enhance a person's ability to remain healthy as long as possible. Your doctor will help you determine the best treatment.

YOU SHOULD BE TESTED FOR HIV IF:




-  You have had sex with someone who has HIV or any sexually transmitted disease (STD)
-  You have shared needles or syringes with others
-  You have had unprotected sex or you have had sex with someone who has had unprotected sex
-  You have exchanged money or drugs for sex (male or female)
-  You have had sex with injecting drug user
-  You have had a blood transfusion between 1978 and 1985
-  You are a woman who is pregnant or desires to become pregnant

Remember: You can't tell whether or not someone has HIV just by looking at them!

WHAT IS UNSAFE SEX?

-  Vaginal, anal, or oral sex without using a condom or dental dam
-  Sharing sex toys
-  Contact with HIV infected blood, semen, or vaginal fluid

WHAT IS "SAFER" SEX?

-  Abstinence (not having sex of any kind)
-  Sex only with a person who does not have HIV, does not practice unsafe sex, or inject drugs
-  Always use either a male or female condom or dental dam with sex

HOW TO USE A LATEX CONDOM:

1. Use a new latex condom every time you have sex.
2. The condom should be rolled onto the erect (hard) penis, pinching ½ inch at the tip of the condom to hold the ejaculation (semen) fluid. Air bubbles should be smoothed out.
3. Use plenty of WATER-BASED lubricants such as K-Y Jelly, including a drop or two inside the condom, before and during intercourse. **DO NOT USE** oil-based lubricants such as petroleum jelly, lotions, grease, mineral oil, vegetable oil, Crisco, or cold cream.
4. After ejaculating, withdraw the penis holding the condom at the base so it will not slip off.
5. Throw away the used condom into a garbage can and wash hands.

This agency provides quality services to all patients, regardless of HIV status.

IF YOU NEED MORE INFORMATION CALL:

Kentucky HIV/AIDS Program 1-800-420-7431 or 502-564-6539
The National AIDS Hotline 1-800-232-4636 (800-CDC-INFO)
1-888-232-6348 TTY

Your local health department's HIV/AIDS Coordinator

